

this country. How does it happen, then, that it proves so successful in operation? Simply because what its critics call complexity is nothing more nor less than the necessary machinery of the system. The English act is most minute in covering every possible point of doubt or uncertainty in the specifications for working the new system. We do not need so minute a measure here, for we have the ballot already, which England had not; but we cannot hope to secure simplicity and success in the working of any system unless we make the act embodying the methods by which the system is to be put in operation, so specific that fraud and confusion will be guarded against at every point. Any "simple" bill which professed to provide for the introduction of so important a change in our election methods as this is, would be a fraud on its face.

But the English and Australian acts are not the only complex ones which have worked simply and well in practice. The Wisconsin law for the city of Milwaukee is "complex" in the same sense, but it has worked admirably in a municipal and national election, and is pronounced by all authorities to be a complete success. It has made elections orderly, has banished the "heelers" and the "workers" from the polls, and has stopped bribery. The Kentucky act for the city of Louisville, passed last winter, is by all odds the most complex of all the adaptations of the English and Australian acts which have been made in America. Yet, in the interesting account of its working in the first election held under it, which we published last week, the writer, a very competent observer, said: "The law, though apparently intricate, is really very simple, and it worked admirably. The election of last Tuesday was the first municipal election I have ever known which was not bought outright. As a matter of fact, no attempts at bribery were made, and a few comparatively unimportant infringements of the law will be severely handled."

THE COMPETITION OF TRUSTS.

ALL the arguments that we see or hear sustaining the legality of Trusts, end with the statement that they also contain the germ of competition which will eventually relieve the public of any harmful consequences of monopoly. Usually the Standard Oil Trust is pointed out as an illustration of the truth of the proposition, it being generally acknowledged that the price of oil has declined during the existence of the Trust, and has reached as low a figure as it could be produced for even if there had been no such thing as a Trust. The explanation of this phenomenon is very simple. The Standard Oil Trust never had a monopoly of oil territory or any considerable share of it. Oil territory has, in one sense, been unlimited, that is, nobody knew at any one time what the limit was, nor can anybody assign any limit now. Boring for oil has been open to the public at all times. Here competition has necessarily been free. The exuberance of nature has kept down the price of the article. When oil is found it gushes to the

surface, and must be stored in tanks or it will be lost. Storage implies the loss of interest on capital. To stop this outgo the oil must be sold. The greater the aggregate gush, the lower the price. The law of supply and demand comes into play, and the Standard Oil Trust could not prevent it if they would. Even if they owned every refinery in the country, and controlled every avenue of transportation, they could not hold up the price against an accumulation of crude petroleum in their rear. Moreover, their market is largely foreign, and here they come into competition with Russian petroleum, which has lately become formidable. This competition reacts upon the home market powerfully; for although there is a small duty on foreign oil, it is of no consequence, under conditions like those now existing, when the pressure of the earth's yield forces a surplus outward at some price.

A Trust is a monopoly, or not a monopoly, according to the particular circumstances of each case. It is harmful or not according to these circumstances. We may grant that there is nothing illegal in these organizations, without conceding anything as to their effects upon society. One thing is certain, namely, that they are a new thing under the sun, and are accordingly to be judged by their effects, and not by rules or dogmas laid down at a period when no such thing existed. Monopolies have existed from the earliest times, but they have been monopolies of a different character, most commonly established by Governments—whether despotic or free makes no difference. A monopoly of the trade in salt granted by an absolute monarch is the same in its origin and foundation as a monopoly of an invention granted by our Patent Office, although differing greatly in moral character. A monopoly of trade with the East Indies or with the Hudson's Bay territory is of the same nature, being a grant from the supreme power of the State.

Trust monopolies are new things under the sun in the fact that they do not have their origin in any act of Government. They are, as Mr. Blaine said, "largely private affairs." He might have said wholly private affairs. They are an outgrowth of modern development of the means of communication. It has become possible for anybody to know the state of the markets and the conditions of supply and demand all over the world for any particular article. Some articles are of such diverse production, or are produced in such large quantity, that they cannot as yet be controlled by any aggregation of capital or by the possession of the most accurate knowledge of their quantities. Others, however, are of such a character, as to sources of supply or manipulation of product, that they can be controlled. All these are gradually passing under such control, and the process involves a redistribution of the rewards of industry of the whole people on a basis as artificial as a government monopoly could produce.

To say that competition will overthrow Trusts is a wholly unwarranted assumption. It may overthrow some and not others, and

it may overthrow none. If it had been said in the beginning that competition would prevent the formation or successful operation of any Trusts whatsoever, that idea would have met with general acceptance, because it would have been in harmony with all experience; but now that experience has proved the contrary, the burden of proof is shifted upon the other side to show *how* competition will do the thing which is admitted to be best for the interests of society. This best thing is that no trade should yield unfair profits, because that implies that all others should yield less. By fair profits is meant the return that would be yielded under the influence of absolutely free competition, under which nine-tenths of mankind must always earn their living. In this discussion nobody can be allowed to indulge in generalities, because the Trusts have overcome generalities at the outset. Having abolished competition, they are required to show how it will come back in spite of everything they can do to prevent it. What remedy shall be devised to abolish them is another question. Probably no one remedy will altogether suffice; but in order that any may be adopted, it is first necessary to know where we stand.

THE WOOING OF CANADA.

MR. BUTTERWORTH'S resolutions to authorize the President to institute negotiations "looking to the assimilation and unity of the people of the Dominion of Canada and the United States under one government—such unity and assimilation to be based upon the admission of the several provinces of the Dominion, or any one of them, into the Union of States upon the same terms and equality with the several States now composing the Union," will probably strike the people of the Dominion as a too hasty change of front after the wrangle of the past three years over the fishery question. Mr. Butterworth would probably acknowledge that the present time is not propitious for anything more serious than a debate in Congress on his resolutions. It is not likely that they will even be debated on the other side of the line, and it is doubtful whether Congress will take up the matter seriously at this session. Mr. Butterworth has been the spokesman of commercial union in the House as Mr. Sherman has been in the Senate, and both are probably moved by the same impulse. The motive is commendable, and the project may be feasible at some future time; but we consider the present a most inopportune occasion for bringing it before the public—inopportune here as well as in Canada.

The opponents of political union—or annexation as they call it in Canada—are nearly all the influential classes in the Dominion. These are opposed also to commercial union, because they look upon the latter as a stepping-stone to the former, which indeed it is. Nevertheless, there is a respectable body of opinion in Canada, favorable to commercial union, which is not ready to entertain the thought of political union. Mr. Goldwin Smith explained the situation very candidly

in his speech at the Chamber of Commerce dinner a few weeks ago. He said that the Commercial Union Club of Toronto embraced members of both political parties in Canada—the Conservatives, or Government party, and the Opposition—and that no question of political union was allowed to interrupt the harmony of their movement. No such question was ever raised or considered in their councils. They were making gains, especially among the agricultural classes, because they were able to show advantages of a material sort from commercial union. He believed that the idea would eventually, and at no distant day, prevail in the Canadian elections, despite the opposition of the protectionists and the office-holding class, if it were not mixed up with the question of separation from Great Britain in the political sense. That question, he said, should be left to the operation of time and natural causes. If the two countries should at some future period, by free choice, decide that political union was for their best interests, he believed that Great Britain would not only interpose no obstacle, but would bless the union. But all such talk was now premature or worse, because it was an obstacle to a fair and unbiassed consideration of commercial union.

If Mr. Butterworth's motion is premature, and therefore not helpful, on the other side of the line, how is it to be regarded on this side? If the protectionists of Canada are opposed to both kinds of union, what view will the same class take of it here? Mr. Butterworth is himself a protectionist of a rather pronounced type. In the recent campaign he acknowledged himself to be the first discoverer of the quotation from the London *Times* about the Celt who is serviceable to England only when he emigrates to America and votes for free trade. How anybody can sustain at the same time the double rôle of a defender of protective duties on Canadian products and of an annexationist, is one of those mysteries of the human mind that baffle all attempts at analysis. If it is profitable for us to keep out Canadian lumber, coal, fish, salt, and potatoes, or to load them with heavy duties in order to discourage their coming into our markets, how can it be profitable to admit them under articles of political union? Does this mean that the producers of these articles in our own country should be sacrificed for the general good? If so, it would seem to be the requirement of justice that all such persons should receive pensions equal to the amount of their sacrifices.

Mr. Butterworth and those who agree with him, if any, are perhaps protectionists in sentiment merely, not having any pecuniary interest to subserve. Those who belong to the latter class will be heard from to some purpose whenever political union or commercial union becomes a really burning question. The American Fishery Union will claim that they supplied an important part of the ammunition in the Harrison campaign. The lumber barons will want to know whether they are to be cheated out of their share of the victory.

The market gardeners along the New England and New York border will be fierce and unyielding in proportion to the smallness of their size. All the interests which derive, or think they derive, an advantage from the tariff against Canada will make the usual proclamation that, if we are to have free trade in these things, we must have it in all; they will transfer their standard to the other camp. This threat, which has been so successfully employed in the past by the wool-growers, by the copper-miners, and by the lumber barons themselves, will rally the other protected classes to their side; and in the end Mr. Butterworth will find himself in an unequal match, contending with his own friends.

MODERN LAW-MAKERS.

THE quality of modern legislators—that is, their standing in the communities which they represent—as well as their fitness for the special work they have to do, is engaging the attention of those philosophers all over the world who are just now studying democracy. That the work of legislation is no longer done in parliamentary countries by the same kind of men who did it fifty, or even thirty, years ago, seems to be admitted on all hands. The *Evening Post* printed the other day a letter from a very competent observer, touching the change which has taken place in this particular in the State of Connecticut, and one passage is so descriptive of what has happened in nearly all the older States that it is worth reproducing:

"In the early part of the present century, during the more rational era of town rule, our grandfathers chose their country squires and prosperous, hard-headed farmers as legislators, and selected them over and over again. Those old-fashioned representatives were doubtless opinionated enough in religious or party matters, but they were rigidly honest, of high personal character, and tried legislators.

"How changed are the Legislatures which the town idea gives us now! The rural constituencies have diminished in population, in wealth, in voting character. The Yankee farmers have, many of them, gone West, and their places have been filled by the foreigner. The tide of rural corruption has swelled until it dashes over the ballot-box and pollutes the very fountain-head of electoral purity. Worst of all in its effect on our Legislatures, the pernicious rotative idea has entered our rural constituencies. The position of a Representative is become a thing of material import, a perquisite to be 'passed around' in the dominant party from session to session. Once holding it is deemed a bar to holding it again, instead of a credential for reelection. Our town idea, therefore, in nine cases out of ten, gives us at each term a callow, second-rate countryman as a legislator.

"It is before such a House, vitiated by the town idea, that there must come the complex legislation of Connecticut—a State with large cities, great railroad, insurance, and manufacturing interests, and with all the ramified problems that modern civilization imposes on a law-making body."

There is perhaps not one of the old thirteen States which has not this same story to tell, in a greater or less degree. The change at the South has of course been precipitated and emphasized by the war, but it is as visible in New York and Pennsylvania, as in Massachusetts. The politician in all of them—that is, the man who either goes to the Legislature himself or has the greatest influence in selecting those who do go—is much more rarely now than

formerly a man prominent in business, or agriculture, or the professions, is much more apt to be an unsuccessful man in private life, and to be unknown or very little known outside political circles. In other words, fifty years ago, as a general rule, communities were governed by men who won their eminence outside politics, or would be eminent if they never touched politics. This is no longer the case. Society, trade, commerce, law, medicine, have parted company with politics, and are more or less in the hands of men who do not share conspicuously in the other work of their time.

A well-known French writer, M. Gaston Jollivet, has recently been discussing this subject in connection with the French Chambers, of course with the usual heat of a French politician. His illustrations in examining the composition of the French Chambers, in its relation to the various callings, as it is now and as it was twenty-five years ago, make rather a dismal showing, even if we leave out of account the numerous charges of corruption which are hurled at the heads of the members. For instance, the bar has, ever since the Restoration, been in the habit of sending its leading men to Parliament. Even under the Empire there were Berryer, Marie, Sénard, and Grévy in the ranks of the Opposition, and, on the side of the Government, Delangle, Baroche, and Chaix-d'Est-Ange, and many others from the very top of the profession. Now the Chamber contains only half-a-dozen of the very obscure, and two of these have been disciplined for professional irregularities. The present leader of the bar, the "bâtonnier," as he is called—M. Durier—could not be induced to go into politics, and neither could his more eminent confrères, Falateuf, Bétolaud, Rousse, and Martini. In the provinces the same story: the lawyers of note stay at home, or are left at home by the people.

The French doctors, too, in bygone days occupied no mean place in the Chamber. Many of the more eminent members of the profession, both in Paris and the departments, were converted into legislators by enthusiastic patients. Men like Bouillaud, Trousseau, Malgaigne, and Trélat were eager to serve, and served faithfully. There are not many doctors in the present Chamber, and none of them conspicuous. One of those who are there has been accused of corruption by the notorious Numa Gilly in connection with the baths of Royat; the charge is probably false, M. Jollivet says, but many people believe it about Dr. Blatin, while they would smile if it were made against Dr. Péan or Dr. Charcot. Turning to finance, the Chamber for the first time does not contain a single regent of the Bank of France, or a director of any leading financial corporation. The prominent merchants and manufacturers are also conspicuous by their absence. In old times the great wine districts, which contain so much of the wealth of France, sent up their leading wine-growers to the Chamber, as the best possible representatives of their industry. In the present Chamber there is only one. The silk industry of Lyons does not elect a single silk-